

BLUE GRASS BLADE

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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

A. T. Parker
Sepulchre
High and Ashland East Side

Genesis Annotated

(By Alice D. O. Greenwood)

When the Good Bein' made this 'arth, do you
Reckon He know'd what 'twas comin' to?
Kase if He did, do you 'low He would
O' sized up the job an' called it good?

Do you fer a minit s'pose that He
Would o' went an' sot out that pizen tree,
Knowin' as well as He does now
That 'twould all bust up in a family row?

An' furdernore, would He go an' make
A critter like that 'ere bloomin' snake,
An' jis fer a little spot o' fun
Let it spile the job that He'd begun?

No, siree! I'll never b'lieve
He put up that job on Adam 'n' Eve,
Bekase 't was anythin' else but fair—
Jis' a low-down nderhan' trick, I swear.

They didn't know right from wrong, you see—
A hell of a fix, it seems to me,
Fer a man an' woman to be placed in,
With the devil himself to buck agin'.

An' then when they'd done what He know'd they'd do,
He goes an' kicks up a hellabaloo
An' drives 'em out o' the old home place
An' cusses Mis' Adam right to her face.

An' the pore young things (so the story goes)
Was driv frum home without no clothes.
Now, ain't that a pretty howdy-ye-do?
Why, I kaint swaller sich rot—kin you?
New Thought Magazine.

A Freethinker on the Defensive

One of the "Crowded Out" Addresses Intended To Have Been
Delivered at the Columbus, Ohio, Convention of Buckeye
Secular Union.

(By Lou Lawrence.)

About a year ago, a new family moved into our neighborhood. In due time, I called upon the lady and was delighted to find her, in the main, a very congenial person. In a short time we began to be very friendly. She expressed herself as being attracted toward me, and as being pleased to find so soon among her new neighbors, a person of similar tastes and opinions.

This woman proved to be a conscientious, energetic, enthusiastic Methodist; and it was not long until she began to talk church. It was "Our church," "Our minister," "Our Ladies' Aid," and so on. For a while, I made such remarks as I could without doing violence to my conscience; but she so persistently assumed that I took an interest in church affairs similar to her own, that I began to feel it to be hypocritical not to make her understand how little sympathy I had with the church and its methods.

I admired the woman's sincerity very much; so I said to her, "If I could be a Christian," Mrs. Monk, "I should be the sort of a Christian you are."

Of course she was duly shocked at the intimation of such an impossibility, and protested that "I was just the sort of person who would make an excellent Christian;" but when I assured her that "I had belonged to the church and could never do so again," she quietly dropped the subject.

Being alternately away from home, it was some time after this before we met again; and when we did so, Mrs. Monk showed no disposition to talk about the church. She was sometimes forced to mention it incidentally, but she did not bring its affairs up for discussion.

I said nothing about my religious views. I knew that now she understood; and, so far, I was satisfied. She seemed a little shy of me, and ill at ease, and it began to look as if my religious opinions were going to cost me another friend.

I was anxious to know how much the lady knew and what she thought, and it was not long until my curiosity was partially satisfied by a visitor's telling me that "I had aroused Mrs. Monk's interest and she had been making inquiry about my religion."

This information decided my course. I liked the woman and wanted to be friends with her; but with me, there is no close friendship without complete candor; so the next time I met Mrs. Monk, I made it a point to criticize the church. Fortunately, she happened to be telling with a discouraged air of the severe strain that had been put upon her as president of the "Ladies' Aid Society," during the preparation for a recent church supper, and of how that society had raised \$1200 within the year of her presidency for the purchase of a carpet for the church and other improvements. I declared to her that "her efforts were certainly praiseworthy if it could be proved that the objects for which they had been put forth were truly beneficial to society, but that I saw she was aware I had my doubts on this head."

At that, the dear little mortal's face took on a look of absolute woe; and she cried, "O, Miss Lawrence, how can you? I don't think I could live if I thought about it as you do."

Well! then we both wanted to talk at once; and we each wondered how the other failed to see things as she did; and, unluckily, it was a cold day and we were standing where our ways parted; so the discussion had to be postponed. It has been resumed for a few minutes at various times, and on the last occasion I told her that "she must come out to my house and we would talk the matter over at length, and if she could convince me that she was right, I would gladly go into the church with her."

She has not come yet; but she is intelligent, sincere and courageous; and Christians of that stamp are not usually so fearful of discussion; so I have a hope that she may yet accept my invitation.

It was these conversations with Mrs. Monk which forced in upon my mind an idea which has often presented itself to me concerning Rationalistic propaganda. It is this: Too much of what is prepared for the Freethought press and platform appeals to those only who are more or less skeptical. We see the fallacies of the various religions so plainly, and we so fully realize the injury which is being done by them to society, that it is difficult for us to accommodate ourselves to the mental condition of the truly believing Christian. We write and speak too much for each other, and do not make sufficiently simple appeals to meet the needs of the conscientious religionist.

It is to this class of people that I am going to address myself. If there is here but one dear Christian sister whose heart is full of reverence for a "heavenly father" who is infinite in knowledge, wisdom, justice, love and mercy, it is to that one person I want to appeal.

My arguments will likely seem old to all you fourth year Freethinkers—Rationalists, Materialists, or whatever be the name by which you desire to be known. But if you get tired, you don't have to listen; for I shall be talking to this precious sister of mine—this woman who wonders how it is possible for a woman to continue to be half human and deny the existence of any god of which she has ever heard.

Make the same statement to two persons of similar mental calibre, who had similar educational advantages, and you will arouse similar ideas; and for this reason I am going to make here just such replies and arguments as were suggested by Mrs. Monk's criticisms and uppeals.

That lady wanted to know how I could be happy without religion, and I assume that there are some here who would like to make the same inquiry. My answer was and is: Because I do not feel the need of any religion. We are never unhappy for lack of that for which we have no craving—for which we have no use. While the church, as an organization, might supply many things which would be acceptable to me, the religion it represents—that is, the creed, the theology, even the morality, are not things of which I feel myself in need.

"O, but creeds and theologies don't amount to much any more," declared my friend, "Our minister doesn't talk much about them; but he preached a beautiful sermon last Sunday about 'Burden-makers and Burden-bearers.' He says it is our deeds, our lives, that count."

Yes, I agree with your minister there. It is our deeds, our lives that count. But it is not our deeds, our personal conduct in general, on which the church is founded, and of which religion consists. The church rests upon creeds and theologies. As an edifice, the church, as well as the mosque and the "Joss-

house," is a place of worship demanded by a body of believers in some form of religion.

A creed is a summary of the fundamental points of a given religion. Even if these points be not formulated, they are there, and form a sort of embryonic creed by which one religion is distinguished from another.

Theology is the science of the being and attributes of a god, and of creation and providence. The fundamental points of a religion, of which a creed is composed, form the basis of its theology.

Robert Flint, in his "Theism," says, "Religion is man's belief about a being, or beings, mightier than himself and inaccessible to his senses, but not indifferent to his sentiments and actions, with the feelings and practices which flow from such a belief." The Standard Dictionary quotes this statement as authority for its definition; and it is, probably, the best, obtainable, concise statement of the meaning of the word.

Hence, it appears that a church is the expression of a religion, that a religion is a belief in a god, that a creed is the main features of such belief, and that a theology is the amplified science of such features. Without a religion there is no church, and without a creed there is no religion.

To make this matter of the essential nature of creeds and theologies more evident, let me ask why we have so many denominations? If the creeds are not important, there is no excuse for the maintenance of so many churches. We have, in our village, eight church edifices; representing, probably, \$150,000; and it is an unquestionable fact that, at the average service, no one of them is more than half full. Last winter, Mrs. Monk complained to me of the meager attendance upon the revival services in her church. I was there a number of times, myself, when there were less than two hundred people in an auditorium which will comfortably accommodate as many as seven hundred—probably more—without the Sunday-school annex.

"If the creeds amount to nothing, or if they are not important features of your religion," I said to Mrs. Monk, "why should not your church and the Presbyterians have held joint services and thus have saved the expense of heating and lighting an extra room, and the preparation of an extra sermon, to say nothing of being more sociable?" Or, taking the weaker denominations, the Methodist church would accommodate, in addition to its own average attendance, the members of the Catholic, Christian and Quaker churches; and the cost of these extra buildings would provide the town with a public library, a thing of which it sadly is in need.

Again: If the creeds and theologies are not important, why collect millions of dollars every year and send it away for the purpose of teaching the Christian religion to the Mohammedans, the Buddhists, or the Hindus; whose morals are, in many respects, superior to those of Christendom?

The missionary goes to other lands for the express purpose of converting the people to Christianity, and to his particular brand of Christianity. He may teach morality, may found schools and educate children; but his primary object is to make Christians of them. And why? (Ostensibly, at least, it is because he believes, and because the people who furnish the funds to pay his salary and other expenses believe, that a knowledge of and belief in Christianity are essential to the eternal salvation of these people; and there is absolutely no other excuse for sending so much money out of the country.)

If a desire to educate and reform the ignorant and vicious be the motive behind missionary work, there is an ample field for its operations in our own land; and the Heathen might aptly quote to us the homely adage, "Sweep before your own door."

It is not necessary for me to recall to your minds the distinguishing features of the theologies which underly the various

religious sects. The very fact that a large number of sects exist and that their adherents refuse to combine in a single organization proves that these adherents consider their various creeds of paramount importance.

Mrs. Monk was inclined to commend their minister because he did not preach theology, but gave them good, moral lectures. This is in accord with the present church methods, and is the present method of church because it is in harmony with the spirit of the times. There is more morality in the world today than ever before, and there is less religion. I confess that morality is a part of the teaching of most religions; but the ethics connected with a religious system is not its most important, or distinguishing characteristic.

Morality is MORALITY, irrespective of the fact that it is incorporated with any one of a hundred religious systems, or with none. Morality is the same whether it be found in the Jew, the Christian, the Mohammedan, the Buddhist, the Rationalist, or the Atheist. To know a man's morals will not enable one to decide upon his religion; but let him give the important points of his theology, and you can name the church to which he adheres.

Now I think Mrs. Monk, and maybe some others, will admit that I am as moral as the average church-member. If that be the case, it would be folly for me to join a church to improve my morals. The only reason I could have for allying myself with any church organization would be to get the benefit of its theology; and as I know of no theology which meets any mental or physical need, I do not feel that religion is in any way necessary to my well-being.

"O, then," you say, "you are so self-righteous that you do not feel the need of help to lead a higher and a better life?"

No, my friends, I am not self-righteous. I do feel the need of very much help. I have, long ago, discovered that it is difficult—nay, sometimes impossible, to live up to the moral standard which I admire, and after which I am blindly groping. I am often conscious of being greatly benefitted by the advice and examples of my friends and neighbors, as well as by the writing of the great minds of this and other times; and yet there are occasions when I would welcome a guidance, a support, which I have never yet been able to discover.

But where am I to find this assistance? Your religion teaches me nothing which I cannot learn from some other source, except such dogmas as are narrow, selfish, and unscientific. I believe Mrs. Monk's particular brand of religion, Methodism, as well as all other Christian religions, still holds out a hope of reward and a threat of punishment, added, I think, to the profession of certain beliefs, as incentives to right living. But these dogmas are altogether unreasonable, and in contradiction to other tenets of that faith.

The reward which Christianity offers is an eternity of happiness after the cessation of man's present existence. And who is to attain to this condition? Your answer must be, "Those who have repented of their sins and believed upon our god." You may add, if you choose, "who have lived humble, contrite lives;" but I am not so sure that your creed requires much besides repentance and belief; and these two requirements are irrational, unjust, and perfectly absurd.

Repentance is produced by pain, or unhappiness, in some form. It is utterly impossible to repent of an act which has brought unalloyed bliss; and how can a man perform the impossible? On the other hand, all men repent in greater or less degree for such conduct as brings them suffering; and, I would ask, is there any merit in the performance of an act which is unavoidable? How could a just god hold his creatures responsible for a lack of that which they could not possibly feel, or reward them for an act which they could not escape?

The same argument will hold good against any requirement of a given belief. Belief depends either upon education, or upon

evidence. An individual may be educated in a certain faith, and despite the fact that he has no knowledge of the circumstances on which it was founded, may never come to question its validity. He takes what he assumes to be authority as evidence; and does not ask for other proof. If, however, he begins to doubt the authority, and goes in search of other evidence and a sufficient demonstration is not forthcoming, he cannot keep a hold on his faith, even on the promise of eternal happiness. Hence you see that to reward a man for belief, or to punish him for unbelief, is not compatible with even our finite sense of justice.

This doctrine of reward for repentance and belief, and punishment for non-repentance and unbelief, not being found consistent with the simplest rules of reason, let us examine our other assertion, viz: that it is in contradiction to other tenets of the Christian faith.

The "God" which the Christian church holds up for our reverence is a being infinite in power, knowledge, wisdom, love, mercy, kindness and justice. I think this is a fair statement of the case. I have no wish to overdraw; and I do not believe

that a consensus of Christian opinion would permit the omission of any one of these attributes. And now let us see to what they lead, and how they harmonize with the doctrine of rewards and punishments.

Before infinite power could produce the first man, infinite knowledge would grasp, in detail, the fate of that man and all his descendants; and a god possessed of both these attributes, before he embarked upon the creation of the human species, was fully aware of every act, every thought, as well as the final doom of every individual of the race. This is a self-evident proposition, but one which has not been fully sensed by many who are familiar with its verbiage. Yet all that is required on the part of people of average intelligence, to enable them to appreciate its inerrancy, is a moment's consideration. If there was a single act of a single man, of which the creator was *Yon* see this word, infinite, is a large affair. To be infinite is ever ignorant, then that creator's knowledge was not infinite. to be unbounded, unconditioned, unlimited, either in time, or space.

(To be continued.)

Some Ministerial Anarchists

**Run Contrary To Law and Constitution When They Compel,
By Force, the Reading of the Bible in the Public School.**

(By Channing Severance.)

A new brand of Anarchists have made their appearance in Los Angeles, the city of the surprises, and I consider them more dangerous than Emma Goldman or the Patterson Reds. They are Methodist ministers by profession; and a religious anarchist is the worst thing that society has to fear, for their intimate relations with Gott have given them the big head, and they assume superiority over everything that walks this earth and demand that their wishes be granted and respected by the people at large.

The constitution of California is the supreme law of the state, and this law clearly and explicitly forbids religious tomfoolery in our public schools; and that means the bible, which is a religious book, shall not be read therein to prevent and corrupt the minds of budding men and women. It is a good law, and one that shows the wisdom of the old timers when they enacted it. Up to date it has been effective in keeping our schools secular in character as they should be, but these Methodist Anarchists have started a direct and determined movement to nullify this law and are now working to force that trouble producer of the ages, the Holy Bible, into the public schools.

A sermon by the imported "Dr." Lock has been preached with this object in view, and a committee appointed from the parsons of this city who meet every Monday to regulate the affairs of the universe by consultation and inspired remarks, has indorsed his views and worked off a resolution pertaining to the same. They have pledged themselves to work for the evasion and the nullification of the law that keeps the bible out of the schools, and by so doing have set a very bad example; for if varied classes of people who don't like certain laws should try to destroy their course, and try to destroy their efficacy, it would have a bad effect on the "law and order" the parsons have always been such sticklers for. But these holy men see nothing wrong in their anarchistic actions, though if one should try to evade the law, which makes it compulsory to eat a lot

of beans, ham sandwiches, and other articles of food if you get a drink of beer or wine on Sunday, they would howl themselves hoarse over the immoral and pernicious act; yet, where is the difference in the two offenses? I see none from the standpoint of law and order. Some newspaper discussion has followed this move of the ministers, and the Catholics have intended to remark, they are glad their separated brethren are waking up to the fact that education without religious training is resulting in the formation of clever criminals, the multiplication of reformatories, etc.; and to get religious education they declare there are but two ways: to establish separate schools as the Catholics have done, or join the Catholics in their demand that the school funds be equitably shared for secular purposes only, with anybody which can fulfill carefully-prepared conditions to the satisfaction of the government, leaving the question as to what doctrine or lack of doctrine is taught in addition to the bodies in control of said schools.

But, until the law is changed, only the first plan can be legally worked for that purpose. So if Protestants want schools where they can read the bible and instil religious nonsense into children, let them too have parochial schools and keep their hands off the constitution of California. But why are the active forces of priestcraft so anxious to get the bible into our secular schools? It is not because crime is on the increase, but because Christianity in all its forms needs bracing up with every influence that can be used or utilized. If the Catholic claim that crime is caused by lack of religious instruction were true, there would be very few Catholics in our penitentiaries; for Catholic are stuffed to repletion with their brand of religion. Yet it does not keep them out, and their numbers therein testify loudly to the falsity of such a claim.

With a nation where two-thirds of the people have no connection with churches and make no profession of Christianity, we behold this fact; the great majority of our criminals are believers in the Christian religion. And that fact makes it necessary to have chaplains in these institutions, so we find them there reading the bible without opposition; for the State gives them another chance to try their spiritual forces on their fellow Christians who went wrong in spite of the bible.

But again the bible fails as a criminal restrainer, for a large per cent. of discharged convicts wend their way back to the steel cell. So some other reason for reading the bible in our public schools must be presented than the absurd one that it prevents crime. It never has and it never will, and every dealer in religious superstition knows it. It is simply a bunco game when the priesthood tries to connect bible reading with good morals and right living, for a long and unbroken record shows the two have no connection. If the bible ever had power to make the world better, why did it not do so in the past, when it flourished without restraint and it was a crime punishable with imprisonment, torture and death to speak against the book? Such a time once existed, and this world was as near a veritable hell as priestcraft could make it; and life was not worth living because of the horrible and damnable conditions the bible and belief in it produced.

The world is better today than at any time since human records were established, though that is not saying it is yet an ideal place; but it is so much better than when Christianity reigned supreme, that every human being with a knowledge of history looks back only to shudder with horror, and feel thankful that conscious existence was delayed until the age of faith was superseded by the age of reason. The best thing that ever happened to humanity was losing its grip on the bible, for

when that happened clear thinking became possible, and the mental vision was no longer blinded by "thus saith the Lord." All progress dates from that time, and to look back to the thousand years in which the world stood still, is like looking into midnight darkness, and I doubt if even a Methodist minister would care to recall those times and live in them; but they are the times the bible blindly believed in insured, and were the human mind to become enslaved again by it, who can doubt the same cause would once more produce the same result. So let us keep this ancient curse and source of mental despotism out of our public schools, and prevent as far as possible its power and influence on the undeveloped minds of children, for the book loses its force as a thought controller when age has developed reason and the credulity period of life has departed.

If Christianity and the teachings of the bible were not perpetuated through taking advantage of children's minds, we would not be long in getting rid of these gigantic evils; so it is the duty of every man who can, by tongue or pen, to fight the clergy in their efforts to regain lost power and privileges, if he desires freedom and progress to continue; for as long as they walk this earth priests and preachers will plot for power and the control of society through superstition.

Los Angeles, California.

Aged Freethinker at End of Life's Journey

Rang Farm Bell Every Year to Commemorate Paine's Birthday. Aaron Davis, of Frederick, Md., a Blade Subscriber, is Dead.

(By D. Webster Groh.)

The following clipping from the Hagerstown, Md., Daily Mail, briefly tells of the death of Mr. Aaron Davis, of Frederick, Maryland.

"Mr. Aaron Davis, the veteran Rationalist, who rang his farm bell in commemoration of every anniversary of Thomas Paine's birthday for the past forty years, died yesterday noon, at his beautiful home at Park Ridge, near Frederick, Md., in his 90th year. He was an honest, industrious, temperate, intelligent, progressive ex-teacher and farmer, respected and honored by all who knew him and was widely known as the originator of "Davis' Prize Sugar Corn," the seed of which he extensively sold. His home was embowered by a great variety of rare trees and vines from varieties of grapes he originated. He will be buried at 10 a. m. Tuesday, in Mount Olivet cemetery, Frederick, and Rationalists from this and other counties are invited to attend the funeral, which will be a Rationalistic one."

The Hagerstown, Md., Evening Globe said of the funeral, under large headlines, the following:

SON CONDUCTED FUNERAL SERVICES

D. Webster Groh, This City and Miss E. Groh, Breathedsville, Assist.

"From his beautiful country home at Park Ridge, embowered with rare trees, vines and exotics of his own planting, the body of the late veteran Rationalist, Aaron Davis, aged 90 years, was yesterday borne to Mount Olivet Cemetery, Frederick, Md., and interred as he had requested with Rationalistic ceremonies and honors, conducted by his son, George, and D. Webster Groh, of this city, Miss Laura E. Groh, of Breathedsville, conducting the musical program.

Mr. Davis had been a teacher, horticulturalist and farmer, originating an excellent variety of pink grapes, and also the "Davis' Prize Sugar Corn," the seed of which sold widely here and elsewhere. He was a friend and correspondent of Luther Burbank, originator of the noted Burbank potato, and was extremely intelligent, broad-minded and progressive."

Baltimore papers printed brief extracts and the Frederick, Md., Daily News said substantially the same as above, adding that Mr. Davis' son, George, read, to those gathered at the house, the following address:

"My Dear Friends and Relatives:

We have gathered to pay our last respects to the remains of our aged father,

whose request was not to have an orthodox ceremony over his remains, as he was a strict believer in natural laws which unfold and develop everything on earth. His motto of life was:

"Seek for truth, where'er tis found,

Among your friends, among your foes,
On heathen or on Christianity ground,

The flower's divine, where'er it grows,
Evade the frickle but secure the rose."

As to his character, it will speak for itself through all who knew him.

He also requested that Mr. D. Webster Groh of Hagerstown, Md., pass a few remarks over his remains before departure for burial.

Mr. Groh then delivered an eulogy upon the deceased, after which the remains were conveyed to Mt. Olivet cemetery and interred beside those of his wife."

His body lies beside his wife, within a few hundred yards of the monument to Francis Scott Key, composer of our famous national song, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The heroine of Whittier's famous poem, "Barbara Frietchie," also lies buried near, meet surrounding to inter, with Rationalistic honors, this ardent veteran Freethinker.

He died about 11 a. m., Sunday, September 5, 1909, from falling through a post and rail fence, his head striking a small stone and his wrist being simultaneously

broken, and his son George found him dead about 12:30 p. m.

He was one of the oldest, most intelligent, beneficent and progressive citizens in Frederick county.

In 1852 he demonstrated the feasibility of raising sweet-potatoes there instead of shipping them as formerly from the Baltimore market, and exhibited several bunches of his home-raised ones at the County Agricultural Fair, after which Western Maryland farmers generally began raising their own sweetpotatoes for home consumption, and in 1856 his experiments with sorghum sugar cane and exhibits of syrup therefrom attracted much attention.

In 1859 he moved to Frederick city and taught public school there and developed the growing of early garden plants of which he was the pioneer in this city.

He was a deep thinker and close student of human nature and other natural phenomena generally.

Intensely loving justice, truth and liberty he quite naturally openly advocated freeing the slaves, read and circulated Horace Greely's, H. Tribune and in 1860, he and five friendly followers cast the only votes in Frederick for the immortal Abraham Lincoln. Surrounding slaveholders and their many sympathizers then regarded him as a favorite, looked on him with suspicion and hatred and called him a "Black Republican," because all neighboring whites but him and his five Republican comrades were Democrats. But he lived to see the great, grand, noble Lincoln, for whom he voted, honored as the greatest of all presidents since George Washington, even by the school children of his opponents, thus amply vindicating his advanced position then.

He did not live to see entirely the same of leading Freethinkers though Freethought has grown much more popular, and his children may yet live to see his advanced position therein as thoroughly vindicated.

In 1870 he purchased and moved to his farm near Fogeville and began propagating new varieties of sweet corn, fruits and vegetables.

His sweet corn is noted for its sweetness, large size, deep grains, abundant ears and many rows of grains to the ear.

He was a son of Jonathan C. Davis and Mary (Winter) Davis, and born in Uniontown, Carroll county, Md., September 20, 1819.

He is survived by his four sons and one daughter, Edward T., Washington D. C., John W., Union Bridge, Md., Wm. O., Chicago, Ill., and George H. and Flora Davis at home.

He was a zealous, consistent, conscientious, intelligent, practical advocate of Freethought, exerting a wide and lasting influence for its advancement among all who knew him, even so planning that in death, his funeral might be advantageously used in justifying and thus propagating his Rationalistic ideas.

As Rationalistic speakers will generally serve free on such occasions, provided their traveling expenses are prepaid by those desiring their services, the Rationalists should follow Mr. Davis' excellent example and thus lay a good foundation for a Rationalistic monument that will stand for ages, impressing Rationalistic principles on countless coming generations, and of which posterity may well be proud.

Hagerstown, Md.

had performed his lonesome vigils and staked his life for her, to find that his country had been looking at him and listening on that night of gloom and danger, when he was all alone close by her foes.

I wanted to tell you that duty well performed by you and your friends would make of you these soldiers, and that the world, as you will find some day, was looking and listening, for sometimes these lonesome vigils, the lonesome work and the lonesome struggle, have not been so lonesome after all. Sometimes the spirit, the hopes of a nation—even of the world—comes and hovers around these lonesome scenes, these single-handed strugglers.

When I lived at Hillsboro, Ohio, I waged war for years and years against the liquor traffic, one of the demoralizing powers in this country, and it and its allies made war against me. One of these allies, as I claimed, during the last few years I lived there, was what calls itself 'The Church of God,' and so between the church of god and the liquor devil I was between two fires. They managed to make things warm for me I can tell you. Sometimes in the heat of some of the fights things would become sulphuriously red and blue, as it were, and my friends at a distance—away off from the scene of the conflict—would write me an encouraging letter, defending and praising my position. So, remembering the good this encouragement from home did me, I thought that I would put in a few words for you.

Sometimes, in human affairs the words away from home are more effective than the words at home, for the words from a distance calls attention to the fact that there is an audience,—and these fellows do not want an audience when they are doing wrong. So, I drop you a few lines, though I never saw you and only know of you as one of those lonesome soldiers far out on the picket line of the army of civilization and progress.

Your war against superstition is all right. It might very properly be called "The Holy War." If there ever was "A Holy War" as applied to things religious, this is the one. It is strange how venerable and "sacred" falsehood—superstition—has often become. There be those in this, my own free country, who look with disdain on those who dispute as facts that a man who was killed 1900 years ago is alive and well today, and is capable of living in a million places at one and the same time; that he can go through a brick, or stone wall, or fly through a key hole or down a chimney; that he was born of a virgin, had a ghost for a father, raised the dead, arose from the dead, himself, could "cast out devils"—devils, too, that after they were out could and did, go into hogs; that

(Continued on Page 12.)

Cheering Words Sent to the Orient

Stray Copy of the Blade Induces Strong Letter to Japanese Freethinkers Who Are Now Fighting For Mental Liberty.

(By Olin J. Ross.)

Mr. D. Kotuka, Editor of The Jiyu Shiso, Tokio, Japan.

My Honored Sir:

I ran across a back issue of the Blue Grass Blade of Lexington, Kentucky, September 17th, a Freethought paper—and read your letter to A. Johnson of San Francisco, which was printed therein.

The reading of your letter about the starting of your paper and the troubles of your friends made me think that I ought to sit down and write you a few lines of

encouragement and good cheer and tell you that though you and your Freethought friends may be having great trials and tribulations, and though it may seem to you that the world regards you not and takes no interest in you, except to hurt you, you after all, in the general round up, you will find that you were in the lime light and that the world did see you and did listen to what was going on, much as many a faithful soldier who has stood guard on picket duty on some dark night in the pouring rain in a dark dismal ravine, surrounded by enemies and all sorts of dangers, and where it seemed that his country would never look for him, nor little care whether he did his duty or not, has waked up on some other day, after he

National Organization of American Freethinkers

OFFICIAL CALL FOR CONVENTION

In the name of and by the authority of the persons whose names are hereunto affixed, Freethinkers of the United States of America, who, having in writing duly expressed themselves as being in favor of a new, national organization that shall undertake and maintain a systematic and advised propaganda of Freethought principles, all persons who hold and believe that the doctrines, theories and teachings of the orthodox Christian church regarding the universe and the origin and destiny of mankind are erroneous, and who believe that happiness and morality can be better subserved by a study and observance of Natural Law than through the medium of prayer, faith or god-worship; who reject all phases and forms of superstition and idolatry; who are free and who desire to be free from orthodox religious restraints in matters affecting human action and conscience; who believe in a full and complete separation of church and state, with all that such separation implies, are hereby called to meet in National Convention in the City of St. Louis, State of Missouri, on Sunday, November 14th, 1909, at the hour of 9 o'clock a. m., for the purpose of devising and adopting a declaration of principles as a basis for such organization; a constitution and by-laws for its proper and effective management and its better government; to elect officers; to outline and adopt a system of propaganda, and to do all other acts and things that may or shall be pertinent to and shall best subserve and aid in the accomplishment of the objects and purposes herein expressed.

Hotel Accommodations.

Arrangements have been made and completed with the management of the Laeclde Hotel, at Sixth and Chestnut streets, in the City of St. Louis, for the accommodation and entertainment of all Freethinkers attending the convention, at fairly reasonable rates. This hotel is conducted on the European plan and provides sleeping accommodations only. There is a well appointed restaurant in connection with the hotel at which good meals can be had for small cost. The hotel rooms vary in price, and range from 50 cents to \$1.00 per day, according to quality of room or whether two occupy the same room. The cost of meals will run from 20 cents up. The hotel is large and commodious. It has ample facilities for the accommodation of all who wish to attend, and is situated in the heart of the business district.

Business and Social.

Owing to the great distance that some of those attending the convention will have to travel, and recognizing the natural desire for sufficient social intercourse during the convention, that such a gathering must create, there will be an informal social and business gathering of the Freethinkers attending the convention, and those residing in St. Louis and vicinity, in the parlors of the Laeclde Hotel, on the Saturday night, after supper, preceeding the Sunday of the convention. This will afford an opportunity for renewing old friendships and forming new ones.

In order to facilitate the business of the convention there will also be an informal caucus to prepare an outline of the work of the convention, select and appoint the several committees, name a temporary chairman and secretary, in order to facilitate the business of the convention and assist in the speedy dispatch of its business.

The caucus will first designate a temporary chairman and secretary; given due authority, the temporary chairman will thereupon appoint the following committees:

On order of business; on organization; on constitution and by-laws; on membership and finance; on propaganda.

The committees will be asked to meet Saturday night or early Sunday morning that their several reports may be ready for submission when the convention is properly called to order.

The Convention.

The Convention proper will be called to order promptly at 9 o'clock on the morning of Sunday, November 14th, 1909, by the temporary chairman who shall be designated by the Saturday night caucus. Such sessions as may be deemed necessary shall be held throughout the day. The Convention Hall is situated at ELEVENTH AND LOCUST STREETS.

Organized Societies.

All organized Freethought societies, national, state, or local, now actively engaged in the dissemination of admitted Freethought principles, are invited and requested to send, or to cause to be sent, any number of delegates or representatives to this Convention, in order that the gathering may be made as universally expressive of American Freethought as it is possible to be. All individual Freethinkers will receive a hearty and cordial welcome.

Charter Members.

All persons, Freethinkers, adopting the declaration of principles, the constitution and by-laws of the organization, and who shall attend the convention in person, and all persons signifying their approval, acceptance and adoption of the same, in writing, addressed to the Secretary, within a time to be specified by the convention, and all those whose names are appended to this call, shall be deemed and recorded on the books of the organization as charter members thereof.

General Invitation.

Extending a fraternal call, a fraternal invitation, and a fraternal welcome to all who love mankind better than fancied gods, who believe in the worship of work, and who desire to unite and co-operate with us in the work of disseminating the high and eternal principles of truth as expressed by Freethought, we are,

John R. Charlesworth, Lexington, Ky.; Parker H. Screembo, Chicago, Ill.; Dr. T. J. Bowles, Muncie, Ind.; Helen M. Lucas, Marietta, Ohio; William C. Cope, St. Louis, Mo.; Josephine K. Henry, Versailles, Ky.; T. C. Jefferies, Cleveland, Ohio; Julia C. Coon, Bartow, Fla.; J. C. Watkins, Kanawha Falls, W. Va.; E. D. Northrup, Ellicottville, N. Y.; George O. Roberts, Dennison, Ohio; D. W. Sanders, Covington, Ind.; J. Atwood Culbertson, Pittsburg, Pa.; Carl Baerwalde, Cleveland, Ohio; Charles F. Randall, Cherokee, Okla.; J. M. Reed, Chicago, Ill.; J. M. Frost, Tampa, Fla.; Wm. J. Howerton, Tularosa, Texas; James S. Davis, Waynesfield, Ohio; James O'Neal, Ft. Smith, Ark.; E. A. Fitch, Wilmington, Vt.; R. G. Earle, Pine Grove, Ark.; Ella P. Hunt, Moline, Kan.; Emily C. Jones, East Lynne, Mo.; Anna O. Jones, East Lynne, Mo.; Mrs. Nels Johnson, Higgins, Texas; W. L. Luce, Annapolis, Md.; M. H. Oberholtzer, Los Angeles, Cal.; Miss Elizabeth Wiley, St. Louis, Mo.; Andrew Jackson Boyer, Washington, D. C.; E. G. Nichols, Norge, Va.; Joel M. Berry, Nat. Mil. Home, Ohio; Harold Banning, Mt. Vernon, Ohio; Charles G. Brown, Ithaca, N. Y.; H. M. Fisk, Pella, Iowa; A. J. Carson, Ardmore, Okla.; George C. Bartlett, Tolland, Conn.; Moragn Wamsley, Cincinnati, Ohio; Osear A. Janieke, Louisville, Ky.; W. A. Cooper, Milo, Me.; Manly A. Brigham, Rumford, Me.

members may celebrate what they have done, and a number of short discourses can be given by prominent Freethinkers present. This dinner can be made a sort of combined family affair, at no greater cost to each than an ordinary meal would be, and at the same time it brings us in closer union and affords a splendid opportunity for closer social compact. This can readily be determined and provisions made therefor at the Saturday night caucus.

The convention is no longer a mere conjecture. In one month it will become a fact. We are going to make Freethought history in America. Its value to posterity and its character depends upon what we do.

Giant strides are now being made toward the consummation of our great desire. We have long been accustomed to regard as Freethinkers those who are known only as subscribers to one or more of our Freethought publications, tacitly recognizing the large body of men and women who stand in between militant Freethought and militant orthodoxy, as passive indifferentists. But Freethought has opened in more avenues than one. The term, "Freethought" is wide, and it is comprehensive. It is broad, liberal and free. Elements, strong within themselves, never heretofore openly allied on the side of active and aggressive Freethought are to be with us in this coming meeting for organization.

The Blade has received the following from Dr. Charles McCormick, of Chicago, Ill. The Doctor's name was sent to us by F. Clayton Stevens, of Hackensack, N. J., as a good place to drop a sample copy of the Blade. We sent them. Dr. McCormick is president of the Association of Independent Doctors, and has borne the brunt of a hard, legal fight for the freedom and independence of the medical profession. He was prosecuted in Kentucky, which we feel somewhat ashamed to admit, but Governor Beckham to his credit stepped in and quashed the proceedings. Dr. McCormick is also Editor of the *Ophthalmologist*, a journal devoted to the interests of the association of which he is president, and this is what he means when he says that "we will reach 6,000 Freethinkers about the 20th of this month." The arrangements had been made for the Laclede Hotel before we received the Doctor's letter. The letter reads:

"October 5, 1909.

Editor Blue Grass Blade:

Dear Sir: I note that you are to have a meeting for the organization of Freethinkers, at St. Louis, November 14. I note you say the arrangements for a hall are being made. Any hotel will furnish a club room free that will seat several hundred people. Let us have a notice of the place so we can print it in *The Ophthalmologist*. Call the meeting for The Southern Hotel. They'll make good. We will reach six thousand Freethinkers about the 20th of this month.

Yours truly,
CHARLES McCORMICK."

Who can say we are not going to win?

Just as Mrs. Luens writes, let us all get together at St. Louis, let every element, society and individual be at the appointed place of meeting and we can effect an organization that will mean something.

A PRIEST IN ERROR.

For a layman to seek and expect reliable information from a priest or preacher, when in doubt concerning disputed questions of religious import, is an altogether useless proceeding, for if an answer is vouchsafed it is either misleading, of doubtful authenticity, or grievously wrong. Old Dame Partington in her battle with the waters of the old ocean with only a mop for her weapon, stood a far better chance of success.

In the old days the laity had no other recourse but the priest for information upon almost every subject. The priest was the Alpha and Omega of instruction. The priest gave such information as was best suited to the perpetuity of his profession without regard to the truth or falsity of the answers given. As time progressed the inquirer turned to other and different avenues of information and at last Truth came forth, armed with Reason, and the priest has never quite overcome, or forgiven, this invasion of his assumed rights and the ignoring of his prerogative as a dispenser of knowledge.

Priests of the present age are not dissimilar to priests of former days in this connection. The same old spirit of misrepresentation animates the order. Here and there a single individual may be discerned who will candidly refuse to discuss issues of doubt, and who will avert the necessity of giving an answer that he feels is in direct conflict with religious authority or his individual conscience. But these are so few and far between, that they constitute a rather glorious exception to the hard and fast rule of the priesthood.

Just a few days ago the Blade received the following communication. Preferring to deliver our views thereon through the columns of the Blade, we so wrote those sending it. The letter reads:

"Jasper, Ind., October 3, 1909.

Blue Grass Blade, Lexington, Ky.:

Gentlemen: Enclosed answer from Catholic Columbian. We have asked them several questions. It took them nearly two months to answer this one. Perhaps you can give us some history concerning this question. Yours truly,
Jasper Furniture Co."

In order that our readers may fully understand the import of the issue in controversy, and what was meant by reference to the Catholic Columbian, we publish the following, which was enclosed for our further information.

"Columbus, Ohio, September 10th, 1909.

Jasper Furniture Company, Jasper, Ind.

Gentlemen:—We crave pardon for apparent negligence

in replying to your letter of the 2nd of July. In some mysterious manner not altogether unusual in a newspaper office it was mislaid.

The Blessed Virgin Mary was the mother only of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For further information I would respectfully refer you to Catholic Encyclopedia, which no doubt you will find in your public library. If not your local priest will give you some authority that will satisfy you on the question.

Very truly yours,
Jas. T. Carroll, Manager."

While the Blade has subscribers in Jasper, Indiana, we have no means of knowing, nor is the knowledge given to us, that the correspondent sending us the communications quoted, is on our mailing list, or not, and we assume that he, or she, must in any event be a seeker after knowledge, and being altogether dissatisfied with the answer given from Roman Catholic sources, resolved to go further by writing to the Blade, expecting, as a natural result, a truthful answer. We also assume that the communication originally sent to the Catholic Columbian contained some questions relative to the progeny of the alleged Virgin Mary, which may be inferred from the tenor of the reply. The Catholic Columbian is a publication devoted to the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, and as that institution worships the virgin Mary as a goddess of the Christian system, the investigator naturally assumed that the church organ would be loaded to the guards with biblical or other authority, and looked to it for the desired information.

We are asked for "some history concerning this question." There is no history concerning it outside of and beyond the new testament, and that is of such doubtful origin and authenticity that it cannot be relied upon. The old testament makes no reference whatever to the reputed father and mother of Jesus. The first mention of these pseudo-sacred characters is found in the new testament. Other writers have discussed the subject from different viewpoints, but both the new testament and the other writings referred to, repudiate the position taken by the Catholic Columbian.

For the purpose of this discussion we might add, that while the Protestant churches all accept the bible as the authority upon which their church is founded, and superior thereto, the Catholic insists that his church is above the bible and accepts the interpretations of the bible given by the priesthood. Protestants are encouraged to read the bible but Catholics are enjoined to leave such matters to the priest who will, it is assumed, give them so much of the bible as the priest deems best for them. This is why the Indiana investigator was referred to the "local priest" who is regarded as being able to give some "authority that will satisfy."

We now refer our correspondent to the 13th chapter of St. Matthew, and beginning with the middle of the 54th verse, we read as follows:

54. "—Whence then hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

55. "Is not this the carpenter's son? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56. "And his sisters, are they not all with us?"

Careful analysis of the foregoing quotation will show that Jesus, if he ever lived at all, which we doubt, had at least four brothers and two sisters, himself making seven children born of the alleged virgin Mary and the stupid church still continues to worship and pay homage to her as a virgin immaeulate. The author of St. Matthew named his alleged brothers. Among Jews women did not count for much, hence his alleged sisters were not mentioned by name, but simply bunched together and referred to as his "sisters." The term being plural implies more than one sister. There could not possibly be less than two, and probably more. The Jews were celebrated as being carnally prolific, even in that age, and the probability was that Jesus had more than two sisters, and some writers have ascribed as many as eight children to the alleged virgin Mary.

In any event the quotation from Matthew is at variance with the James T. Carroll, who speaks for the Catholic Columbian. Nor could such a work as the "Catholic Encyclopedia" be of any value in such a controversy, for having escaped the "Index Expurgatorius" it is admittedly a special preparation for such of the "faithful" who are willing to accept it as an authority to the exclusion of other sources of information. Nor would an appeal to the "local priest" afford any additional light on this subject, in that the aforesaid "local priest" is admirably posted on what information to give and what information to withhold.

It is evident that the writer of Matthew, assuming the account to be true, had recognized Jesus as the son of the carpenter. The people who are reported as having used the language quoted, must have known him and his family relationships from his infancy up. They were supposed to be his neighbors. The "carpenter" and his family connections, including his children, must also have been known to them. We say, accepting this as true, for the sake of argument only, they must have known more about the situation than the Catholic Columbian or the "local priest" at Jasper, Indiana. There is no record that the "carpenter" ever forsook his spouse and took unto himself another wife. The one answer needful is that the whole business is a howling farce, and none of it can possibly be true, including the Catholic Columbian.

Rev. D. H. Carrick has just resigned from the North Lawrence Christian Church, at Lawrence, Kansas, and has become a street car conductor, for the reason that he says: "I don't believe a minister can live a really honest life. If he preaches the truth he will be condemning the lives of most of his congregation and offending them. He passes over this and that and lives a lie every day of his life in order not to offend the influential members of his congregation." It will take time, but one by one the clergy are coming to their senses.

HALLEY'S COMET AND JESUS.

Suggestion That This Known Astronomical Occurrence Might Have Been Mistaken for So-called Star of Bethlehem.

(By Manly A. Brigham.)

There have been many speculations as to what planet may have been so brilliant in the sky about the time the birth of a Jewish redeemer was expected as to impress the minds of the recorders of the birth of the son of Joseph and Mary, who was named Jesus, as a special star sent to herald the event. Of course there is the possibility, and as Mangasarian shows a large one, that the whole story was originated as a play, and had no foundation in fact; but granting that there was some real happening upon which the story was based, and that about the time of the birth of Jesus the sky was illumined by a brilliant light that seemed to be moving rapidly, we can not help wondering what light it was.

It has always seemed to me that the planets were common sights in the skies of those days, even though what they were was not known, and that one of them would not have been taken to relate to any particular event. The other day it occurred to me that possibly a comet might have been seen and that would have been of sufficient strangeness to have impressed the minds of men. And when in later years, the man who was born near to the time when the comet was in the sky, was proclaimed as the savior, the fact was remembered and made to do duty in the manner that it appears in the gospel story.

In calculating the orbit of Halley's comet it is found that not many years from the time Jesus is said to have been born it must have been crossing the earth's orbit. It is not impossible that allowing for the variations in its time orbit, and the uncertainty of the year of Jesus' birth, that the events may have been in the same year. It is likely that the comet was sighted then by the first of January. It is calculated that it will appear this time about the first of March. A rough calculation of the cycles of the comet makes it appear about the year 16 A. D. It is easily seen that those few years may be closed in upon from both sides, and narrow the difference materially between the two events, if not bring them together.

I just suggest this matter, hoping that some of your readers who are well versed in astronomical lore will find out if there is anything tangible in the idea. The matter may have been written of by others, but I have never seen anything upon the subject.

Rumford, Maine.

NEW SUGGESTION FOR PROPAGANDA.

(By Julia C. Coon.)

Now that the Blade has become a paper that Freethinkers can be proud of, why would it not be a good plan to print an extra large edition, and arrange with all subscribers who can to employ a newsboy in the respective towns and cities to sell the paper. The Blade is attractive in size and appearance, and should sell readily for 5c a copy, the newsboys adding the name Freethought to the title. I began to inquire where a Freethought paper was published three years ago, and I found no one here who had ever heard of one. And I believe there are thousands of others who are awakened to the false foundation of Christianity, but who have never chanced to get in touch with the Freethought press. We ought to devise some way to reach them. When we realize how great a fraud Christianity is, and its mighty power in holding the people in poverty, ignorance and slavery, we are not entirely free from self-censure that we have reached so few, while millions are yet to reach.

At our barbeque at this place nearly every Adventist man, woman and child had a bundle of Adventist propaganda, offering to sell to the general public at 10c a copy. These people are zealous in their cause because they fancy they are appeasing the wrath and courting the favor of a jealous fiend. Surely Freethinkers may have as much zeal to defend freedom and truth as these people an ancient myth.

It has long been one of my hopes to see Freethought newspapers sold on the streets. And now that real organization is at hand it seems to me a most fitting time. Perhaps it would be best to try the experiment with a special edition, with optimistic letters on organization, your good editorials nailing Christian slander, and short selections of Ingersoll's eloquent appeals, and Paine's good, sound logic. The very best arguments for Freethought, truth, morality and humanity should go in irrespective of originality, for it would all make new reading for the greater part of the purchasers. For my part I would want no better answer to the vilifiers of Paine and Ingersoll than leaves from their books and pamphlets. The denouncers of these heroes are mostly people who have never read a word of their writings.

And then let us have news. News of Freethought progress, organizations, papers and magazines, able lecturers and writers. We have them, and "nothing succeeds like success," and letting the world know about it.

Bartow, Fla.

CHEERING WORDS SENT TO THE ORIENT.

(Continued from Page 6.)

though he died a long time ago he can get into a man's bosom or woman's bosom the same as he ever could; that the bosom is where he delights to live; that he had the faculty of forgiving the wrongs some people had done to other people as well as to himself; that he has been able to forgive these sins ever since he was killed, just as well as he could before he was killed, and that he has a big heaven and a big hell somewhere, the exact location of which no man has ever been able to find out.

Yes, sir, these spook house gentlemen, as I have named them, not only believe these great tales about their friend Jesus, but they will sneer at the intelligence of the man who does not. Just think of the gall that it takes to sneer at the man who refuses to accept these claims made for "Friend Jesus!" Such sneering puts me in mind of the little boy who would sneer at the grown school teacher when she told him that it was not true that there was a Santa Claus, who roamed the heavens with a reindeer team, hunting tall chimneys and little boys stockings on a certain night of the year.

The learned gentlemen of the spook house schools of thought believe the tales about Jesus and his two fathers, god and the ghosts, just as the little boy believes the tales about his friend Santa Claus. They are no further along than the boy.

The learned gentlemen in your country who have thrown your friends into prison because they have suspected the existence of the sacred spooks, called "Gods," or what not, are in the position of the little boy whose mind is filled with the glories of his friend with the reindeer outfit,—only the boy would scarcely throw his skeptical friend into prison for saying that there was no such personage with the reindeer team that if there was he did not go down chimneys and hunt for little boys' stockings.

(To Be Continued.)

Plenty of Confidence.

BROAD TOP CITY, PENN.—Find enclosed \$2; please give me credit on my subscription to the Blade. I am an old man and not able to work, or I should be with you on the 14th of November at St. Louis (I would prefer Cincinnati). I have confidence in the contributors of the Blade, and know you can get up an organization that will win, with such as yourself, Dr. Wilson, Mrs. Henry, Mrs. Closs, Dr. Bowles, and a host of others that have the good, sound brains to get up an organization to suit us. Wishing you success in the undertaking, I am, very respectfully,—HENRY COOK.

Still Clamoring for Organization

Ideas and Suggestions Offered for our Best Consideration.—Pure Free-thought Wanted.—More Favorable Comments on the New Movement.

Helen M. Lucas Speaks Out.

Are suggestions in order?

On what can all Freethinkers unite?

They differ on many subjects, but I know of no one who does not oppose the union of church and state. They oppose the employment by the government of chaplains in the army and navy, Congress, State Legislatures, penal and charitable institutions. All oppose religion in schools supported wholly or in part by taxation; exemption of church property from taxation; the use of the oath in our courts of law; religious proclamations by our Presidents and Governors; all laws enforcing the religious observance of any day.

Can not all unite on these questions?

There are many lines of argument against all these ways in which church and state are united in this country. Is not the work here suggested enough for one society?

Of course, no member would be restricted to these things, but could take up as many as he pleased, either individually or in their particular organizations. But we can not all unite on other questions, though they do not pertain properly to Free-thought. Local clubs could discuss them, but a national society must stand for what we all believe. If the money of a Spiritualist should be used to spread Materialism there would be a split more or less wide; and it would be the same with other different beliefs. We have Materialist, Spiritualist, Woman Suffrage, Socialist, and other societies where no one need drag in the work of our proposed organization. To be plain, the work properly belonging to them should never be allowed in this one.

Guided by former complaints, it seems to me the expenditure of the money of the society should be governed by the ballot of its members.

Let the new organization be irreproachable in every respect.

TO ST. LOUIS, NOVEMBER 14th!
Marietta, Ohio.

The New Organization.

MONTREAL, CANADA.—The news of the conference of the Buckeye Secular Union and the proposal in the Blade to organize a National union, is inspiring. This is a kind of work in which there should be no imaginary geographical lines

drawn. I shall be most happy to become a member of any such union providing the fees are not very high. I believe I was the only subscriber from Canada to the Paine Celebration last Summer. My trouble with the Clerical party here in recent years was closely identified with men from the South side of the line of 45. A Yankee by the name of Torrey comes to Montreal and insults the memory of a famous Free-thought Humanitarian Yankee—Robert G. Ingersoll,—and he is brought to his knees by a Highland Scotch Freethinker—the writer of this note. It is only one, who like myself, has been fighting the enemy without organization for the last 15 years, that can really appreciate the value of organization. They have of late years organized a hellish reign of terror by secret means. "Keep away from the Infidel,—Don't read any of such bad literature!" That is their method. They are afraid to take up one man in a fair and square open fight on the platform, yet they will stoop to all the ways of the serpent to terrify him through his pocket. This is Christian love. These people deserve all the roasting that a Juvenal, a Voltaire or an Ingersoll can give them, and it can only be done effectively by organization.—NORMAN MURRAY.

For Organization.

CHIAFFEE, MO.—I heartily endorse your plan to organize a band of Freethinkers as outlined in the Blade for the purpose of investigating all questions pertaining to the well-being of man. I approve the nine articles of the federation as propounded by Brigham and Means in Oct. 3d number of the Blue Grass Blade, especially the first, which reads: "For the utmost freedom of thought, speech and press, so long as the rights and happiness of no man and the welfare of the nation be not entailed." The platform should be so liberal and broad as to include all who are seeking to gain all the light and knowledge on all questions that affect our peace and well being, both Christian and Infidel, Deists and Atheists, Spiritualists and Materialists. With this purpose in mind, I dei rehros owmteos :!sf KQJ mind, I desire to throw some light on a vital principle: I mean the "American (universal) Brotherhood," in the 8th article of these declarations of principles. Brotherhood means children of one common father, and if we have not one father, how can we be brothers?

Prof. Tyndall said: "Matter is not that

empty capacity that theologians have pictured it, but the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her womb." Herbert Spencer said: (see "At the Root," page 9.) "If then I have to conceive evolution as caused by an originating mind, I cannot conceive this mind as having attributes akin to those of the only mind I know, and without which I cannot conceive mind at all. I cannot think of a single series of states of consciousness as causing even the relatively small group of actions going on over the earth's surface,—how then, is it possible for me to conceive of an originating mind, which I must represent to myself as a single series of states of consciousness working the infinitely multiplied series of changes simultaneously going on in worlds too numerous to count."

Right here is the "dark point" that has puzzled some of the greatest minds that have reasoned on the subject, and here is where I want to throw some light on the subject. Granting that we can only conceive of an "originating mind" by the mind of man, it is by my mind that I know that I exist, and that this mind pervades (is omnipresent in) every part of the body. I know that mind formed every organ and controls every movement of its members. As the mind of man governs the whole body, by the nervous system, so, although "a single engineer could not possibly occupy each engine and all of them at the same time," the train dispatcher can know and have "in his mind's eye" every train on the road, and direct its movements by the telegraph. The bodies of men and animals, science tells us, are infested by myriads of animalcules and bacteria, the same as this world is filled with organic and vegetable life, and they sustain the same relation to our bodies as we do to the world which we inhabit. Now, if we can "conceive how a single series of states of consciousness (the Mind) can cause the actions going on in the body," we may, in some measure at least conceive how "an originating mind" can be omnipresent and govern, not only this world, but the entire Universe, for all worlds and systems are connected and controlled by the electric and magnetic currents.—A. E. WADE.

Endorses the Organization.

DEVOL, OKLA.—I heartily endorse your proposed organization, but I cannot say that I will be able to attend the convention. Have no choice as to place of meeting.—M. C. MARTIN.

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By

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Cloth—\$1.25 postpaid.

BLUE GRASS BLADE,
Lexington, Ky.

Evolution of the God Idea

"The Evolution of the God Idea," by the late Grant Allen is one of the most remarkable books of the century. 63,000 copies have been printed and nearly all circulated by the "Rationalist Press Association" of London, in cheap form, and is now offered for 25 cents postpaid by the American Agent of the R. P. A.

NORMAN MURRAY,

246 St. James St. Montreal, Canada



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